Essex Co., Eng.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, Thomas LO: FAIRFAX,

GENERAL of the ARMY,

And the Councel of OFFICERS under his Command.

A sincere and respective manifestation of the Judgements of Ministers of the Gospel within the County of *Essex*, concerning your present proceedings against the King, the secluded Members of Parliament, and some materiall Overtures in *the Agreement of the People*, lately published by your appointment.

January 23. 1648. *Imprimatur*

JOHN DOWNAME.

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Essex, Eng. (County). Ministers

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To the Right Honorable,

THOMAS Lo. FAIRFAX:

GENERAL of the ARMY,

And the Councell of Officers under his Command.

IN conſcience of our Duty to God and men, and in performance of our Proteſtation, Vow and ſolemn Covenant, being called thereunto by your late Remonſtrance, and following Declaration, appealing to the Judgement of the People, we hold our ſelves obliged not to be altogether ſilent or wanting in ought we can lawfully ſay to keep off impending ruine from King, Parliament and Kingdome, now brought to the uttermoſt Criſis of danger, the preſervation whereof ought to be more deare unto us, then our Eſtates, lives, or any thing in this world that men count precious. We have therefore with ſerious and compoſed minds deliberated upon what your Army holds forth in their Remonſtrance and Declaration, and conſidering your late proceedings in purſuance thereof, we have taken the boldneſſe to give this reſult of our thoughts, as

First, we neither do nor can approve of the violence and force done by some of your Army upon the House of Commons, in surprizing, imprisoning and secluding so many of the Members thereof, going to the House to perform their duties, being (as we conceive,) not only a great violation of the Priviledges of Parliament, but also of a Divine Precept given to souldiers by that burning and shining light, *Luk.* 3. 14. *Do violence to no man: Or make no man to tremble.*

2ly, Neither can we approve of such over-severe & high-handed actings of your Army, together with the remaining Members of the H. of Commons in proceeding against the King. It being contrary to the Parliaments Remonstrances and Declarations, published in the name and by the Authority of one or both Houses, professing both to the King himselfe, Kingdome and forreigne States, that they never intended the least hurt, injury or violence to the Kings Person, Crowne, Iust Dignity or Posterity, contrary also to our Protestations, Oathes and Covenants, and to the thoughts and expectations of us and many thousands more, who have engaged in the Parliaments cause. And being not only unwarrantable in it selfe by any Divine precept or example, but full of sad Consequents, not only to all the three Kingdomes, but also the Protestant Religion, and Professors of it, to make both it and them an abhorring and hissing to all Nations, specially when they shall heare of his condescending and yeelding to the desires of his Parliament and People, granting greater advanta-

vantages for the Settlement and Peace of this bleeding Kingdom, and preservation of the true Protestant Religion and our Liberties, then hath been obtained in times past of any of his Predecessors.

Thirdly, neither can we assent to the present intentions and indeavours, to alter the frame and constitution of the Civill Government of this Kingdome by hereditary Kings, Lords and Commons, it being contrary to our Solemne League and Covenant, and to the Parliaments former Declarations, and the way to introduce at least for a long time Arbitrary Government, and to bring the free-born Subjects of *England* under Martiall law, which is unsuitable to English Spirits; nor is this change consonant to the Councel of the wise King *Solomon*, Prov. 24. 21, 22. *My Son, fear thou the Lord and the King, & meddle not with them that are given to chang, for their calamity shall rise suddenly, and who knowes the ruine of them both?*

Fourthly, Neither can we approve of the endeavours to discourage the learned, able and godly Ministry of the Gospell, and not to introduce an ignorant and unlearned; not unlike *Jeroboams* Priesthood, *who* 1 *Kings* 12. 31. *made Priests of the lowest of the People, and whosoever would might consecrate himselfe*, 2 *Chron.* 13, 9. because upon it will unavoidably follow a famine of the Word, and grosse darkness upon the People, and inundations of damnable Errors, and drowning of many precious soules in perdition, (the blind leading the blind,) and reproach and ignominy upon our Nation.

Lastly,

Lastly, Nor can we by any meanes assent to that intolerable *Toleration* and boundlesse Liberty, for every man to professe whatever faith he fancieth, except Popery and Prelacy; which though we mention last, yet we are sensible that it is the first in the eye and intention of too many, and that their aime in proceeding against the King, dissipating the Parliament, altering the Civill Government, making void wholesome lawes, clipping the power of the Magistrate in matters about Religion, and Church, and disheartning the learned Ministry of the Gospel, is the paving a way for the bringing in this great Engine against the Truth of God, and power of Godlinesse, and from hence comes the pretended necessity, which is made so much use of, to justifie the present walking in untrodden paths, which licentious Liberty is Libertinisme, and not Christian Liberty, which is a Liberty to professe the Truth only, and contrary to the Solemne Covenant, by which men are ingaged in their severall vocations, (Magistrates in theirs, Ministers in theirs, &c.) to indeavour the extirpation of *P*opery, *P*relacy, Error, Heresie, Schisme, and all that is contrary to sound Doctrine; In which respect we cannot but wonder, even to astonishment, that men professing Godlinesse should appeare for a Toleration of all, but Popery and Prelacy.

While we were indeavouring a further enlargement of our minds in this behalfe, we received with much gladnesse a serious and most faithfull Representation of many of our learned and pious brethren,

thren, Miniſters of the Goſpel in the Province of *London*, more weighty and perſwaſive then any thing our ſelves could tender, which ſo far as it concerns matter of diſſent, we do freely and fully ſubſcribe together with our owne.

We had much rather God would perſwade the hearts of your Excellency and Councell, to lay down a convenient Part of your forces, withdraw from the *Parliament*, reſtore the *Members* impriſoned or ſecluded, and joyne with the reſt of the *Kingdome*, in petitioning a revivall of the ſelf-denying Ordinance, taking away private and perſonall advantages from Members and Officers, and ſuch other Remedies, as both Houſes ſhall judge neceſſary for the ſettlement of Religion and Peace.

And not only ſo, but we thinke our ſelves bound in humble and expreſſe termes to declare to the whole *Kingdome*, all the Chriſtian Churches and Members of Chriſt, that we apprehend the forementioned proceedings of the Army to be utterly unlawful and unchriſtian.

We ſhall notwithſtanding preſent our unceſſant *Prayers* at the Throne of grace, that God would be pleaſed freely to pardon whatever miſcarriage hath eſcaped them, and for time to come to guide them by his Councell, and preſerve them from every evill way.

FINIS.

Edward Dowell
George Smythe.

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